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Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2113

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP PDEV LT
SUBJ: KING MOSHOESHOE AND PRIMIN LEABUA JONATHAN: PROPOSED VISITS TO US

REF: STATE 166071

1. SUMMARY. LESOTHO FOREIGN MINISTER C.D. MOLAPO TOOK INITIATIVE IN RAISING TWO CURRENT ISSUES DURING JULY 4 EVENT AT MASERU. FIRST WAS VISIT OF KING MOSHOESHOE TO THE US; SECOND WHETHER THERE WAS "ANY POSSIBILITY" PRIMIN JONATHAN COULD BE RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT CARTER IF (REPEAT IF) JONATHAN DECIDES TO ATTEND THE UNGA MEETING THIS FALL. END SUMMARY

2. MOSHOESHOE VISIT. AFTER MOLAPO INITIALLY PURSUED THE LINE OF AMBASSADOR MAKEKA (REFTEL) THAT KING MOSHOESHOE SHOULD, ON PROTOCOL GROUNDS, SEEK MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, I NOTED THAT PLANS WERE FAR ADVANCED FOR PRIVATE VISIT WITHOUT SUCH A MEETING, THAT INTRODUCTION OF PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS WOULD COMPLETELY CHANGE THE PICTURE AND, IF MADE A CONDITION OF THE VISIT, FORCE CANCELLATION. IN ADDITION, I SAID I UNDERSTOOD PRIVATE VISIT WAS ENTIRELY IN ACCORD WITH THE KING'S
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WISHES. IN RESPONSE TO MOLAPO'S COMMENT THAT PRIVATE VISIT BY A CHIEF OF STATE WAS SOMEHOW INAPPROPRIATE, I NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF REIGNING MONARCHS VISIT US EACH YEAR TO REPRESENT THEIR COUNTRIES' INTERESTS OR FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT. I SUGGESTED OUR FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE A VISIT BY THE KING. IF VISIT WAS TO OCCUR, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ON THE BASIS ALREADY ESTABLISHED. OTHERWISE IT SHOULD BE CALLED OFF. MOLAPO SAID WE SHOULD DO

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NOTHING REPEAT NOTHING TO CHANGE THE KING'S PLANS. "LET THE VISIT GO FORWARD", HE URGED. HE DID NOT REACT TO MY REQUEST THAT HE SO INFORM US IN WRITING. (LATER AT THE SAME OCCASION QUEEN MAMOHATO CONFIDED TO US THAT THE KING EXPECTS TO VISIT THE US IN SEPTEMBER.)

3. PRIMIN'S POSSIBLE TRAVEL TO UNGA. MOLAPO THEN SAID PRIMIN JONATHAN MIGHT ATTEND UNGA THIS FALL. "WAS THERE ANY CHANCE OF JONATHAN BEING RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT CARTER?" HE ASKED. (THE PHRASING OF THE QUESTION INDICATED LACK OF ENTHUSIASM AND EXPECTATIONS.) I REMINDED HIM OF LARGE NUMBER OF CHIEFS OF STATE AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT THAT ATTEND UNGA EACH YEAR CONCLUDING THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHAT THE PROSPECTS MIGHT BE. MOLAPO HIMSELF HAD ATTENDED MANY UNGA SESSIONS AND KNEW THAT IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR TWO OR THREE DOZEN CHIEFS OF STATE OR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO BE IN NEW YORK AT ANY ONE TIME. MOLAPO SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM. NEVERTHELESS, HE ASKED IF I WOULD PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF JONATHAN MEETING PRESIDENT CARTER IF FORMER SHOULD DECIDE TO ATTEND FORTHCOMING UNGA SESSION. I SAID I WOULD OF COURSE TRANSMIT HIS REQUEST.

4. ACTION REQUESTED:

A) THAT PLANNING PROCEED ON KING MOSHOESHOE'S PRIVATE VISIT, I.E., NOT INCLUDING PROTOCOL VISITS; AND
B) THAT DEPARTMENT PROVIDE RESPONSE ASAP TO MOLAPO'S INQUIRY
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AS TO WHETHER PRIMIN JONATHAN MIGHT MEET WITH PRESIDENT CARTER DURING FORTHCOMING UNGA SESSION.

5. COMMENT. AS INDICATED, MOLAPO'S REQUEST WAS NOT PRESENTED WITH CUSTOMARY VIGOR. THIS MAY WELL BE BECAUSE IT WAS ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF. FOR THAT REASON ALONE I BELIEVE WE SHOULD JUDGE THE REQUEST ON ITS MERITS. ANOTHER REASON IS THAT THE PRIMIN TOLD ME LATER HE WANTED TO SEE ME DURING MY NEXT VISIT TO MASERU. FONMIN IS BELIEVED TO ASPIRE TO POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER AND EVEN NOW IS KNOWN TO INTERCEPT REQUESTS TO SEE THE PRIMIN (INCLUDING MINE ON OCCASION). ASSUMING THAT PRIMIN JONATHAN WILL ALSO RAISE THE MATTER, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO BE ABLE TO REPLY TO QUESTION OF WHETHER EVEN A BRIEF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IS WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY. IT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE A TREMENDOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO GOL--AND TO JONATHAN. IT COULD BE MOST HELPFUL IN AFFIRMING LESOTHO'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR US POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. BY THUS STRENGTHENING OUR TIES WE WOULD ALSO GAIN LEVERAGE FOR DISCOURAGING GOL FROM ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES (INCLUDING CUBA AND NORTH KOREA) AND THEREBY ADVANCE OUR OBJECTIVES OF COUNTERING INSTABILITY AND RADICALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

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